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COMMITTEE FOR PROGRAMME AND COORDINATION
Thirty-second session
11-22 May 1992
Agenda item 9

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE FIRST PART OF ITS THIRTY-SECOND SESSION

Draft report

Addendum

Rapporteur: Sally E. MOSS (Bahamas)

III. PROGRAMME QUESTIONS

A. Programme performance of the United Nations for the biennium 1990-1991

1. At its 9th and 10th meetings, on 15 May, the Committee considered the report of the Secretary-General on programme performance of the United Nations for the biennium 1990-1991 (A/47/159 and Add.1).

2. The report was reviewed against the background of the discussion by the Committee of the Joint Inspection Unit report entitled "Reporting on the performance and results of the United Nations programmes: monitoring, evaluation and management review components" (A/43/124) and of the conclusions and recommendations made by the Committee at its thirty-first session on the methodology proposed by the Secretary-General for monitoring and reporting the programme performance of the United Nations (A/46/173).

Discussion

3. A number of delegations stated that the report remained inadequate and expressed doubts about its usefulness. They also stated that it did not provide Member States with an analytical insight of programme implementation.

Other delegations commended the clarity of the report and noted an improvement in the information provided on the changes affecting the implementation of the programmes.

4. A number of delegations expressed concern about the large number of terminations and modifications of, and additions to, programmed outputs at the initiative of programme managers and requested assurance that the provision of regulation 5.2 relating to monitoring of programme implementation had been adhered to.

Conclusions and recommendations

5. The Committee recommended that the Secretariat improve its planning of the preparation and publication of CPC documents.

6. The Committee noted that the report (A/47/159 and Add.1) did not as yet reflect the improvements proposed by the Secretary-General in his report to the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session (A/46/173) as the improvements were mostly predicated on the revised format of the programme budget introduced for the biennium 1992-1993. The Committee noted that they would be reflected in the revised format.

7. The Committee stressed that future reports on programme performance should balance the current quantitative approach with an analysis that would provide more useful information on the implementation of the various activities cited in the programme budget and on the departures from programmed commitments.

8. It was agreed that there was a continued role for the counting of outputs implemented against outputs programmed in the programme budget. However, while such measures could help to identify trends in implementation rates and provide accountability, the limited value of such statistics in providing an overall assessment of the implementation of the programme budget was pointed out. It was also agreed that the effectiveness of monitoring was a function of the quality of the medium-term plan and the programme budget. The effectiveness of monitoring would only be enhanced to the extent that the plan and the programme budget were specific in quantifying outputs and activities planned and financed.

9. The Committee noted that 77 per cent of the programmed outputs were implemented during the 1990-1991 biennium. However, it also noted that global rates of implementation could be misleading when all outputs were treated equally. The Committee was of the view that only through a differentiation between the diverse activities undertaken by the Organization would comparison of rates of implementation for the various activities become meaningful.

10. The rate of implementation for outputs under programme elements designated as being of the highest priority (80 per cent) was noted and the view was expressed that greater efforts should be made to implement all

activities designated high priority. The Committee noted the low implementation rate for publications (70 per cent), and reiterated the need to review the publication policies of the Organization, as called for by the General Assembly in resolution 46/185.

11. The Committee agreed that vacancy rates for the programme budget sections reviewed should be presented in a tabular format and their implications on programme performance analysed.

12. The Committee, recalling the recommendations made at its thirty-first session (A/46/16, paras. 394-400), stressed the need for a closer link between programme performance and budget performance reports. The Committee also recalled, in that connection, the recommendation concerning the establishment of a system of accountability and responsibility (A/46/16, para. 400) and General Assembly resolutions 40/185 and 46/189, in which the General Assembly endorsed those recommendations.